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THE WRITING OF A PLAY

Metamorphosis of Sothorn's "Captain Lettarblair."

HOW MISS MERINGTON WROTE IT

An Interesting Chat with the Author of the Only Artistic Success of the Present Season in New York—The Many Trials of a New Playwright.



ANY person who suddenly achieves fame at once becomes an interesting character, and in these days when a large majority of American theatrical managers are assiduously engaged in asserating that good plays come only from the other side of "the pond," the personality of the man or woman who upsets this delusion is a subject of which the public at large and the "suckling Bards" in particular delight to read.

Genius is a very rare thing, and there are always lots of purchasers after it. In fact, so shrewd a manager as Mr. Field, of the Boston Museum, has ordered from Miss Merington a serious play called "Goodby," which will be produced in October or November.

On the surface "Captain Lettarblair" appears to the outsider only as a play which was given at a trial matinee last spring, and produced in August at the Lyceum theater, New York. I was curious to know how this young woman, entirely ignorant of professional theatrical matters, had been able even to secure a hearing for her play from Mr. Sothorn, and I confess that the story, as told me by Miss Merington, has increased rather than diminished my surprise.

Miss Merington has long taken an interest in amateur theatricals. She has a lady friend of similar tastes, and the embryo playwright was constantly suggesting that this, that or the other thing would make a pretty scene. As Miss Merington is a lady of high literary attainments, as her contributions to the magazines will attest, her friend, who is also an intimate acquaintance of Edward Sothorn, suggested that she adopt dramatic writing as a profession, and promised to send Mr. Sothorn to see her. As the actor was at that time sadly in need of a play the preliminary portion of the programme went through without a hitch.

Three years ago Mr. Sothorn first visited Miss Merington at the request of the mutual, and in this case it must be admitted helpful, friend. The interview on that occasion was not a particularly comprehensive one, as the actor only explained to the aspiring playwright the line of characters which he desired to play. Among others he mentioned that the Irish gentleman would be a type new to the stage.

For a few days Miss Merington busied her mind with concocting interesting stories revolving about the central figure of an Irish gentleman. Then she wrote a first act, several times too long, which she sent to Mr. Sothorn, who paid her another visit in the following spring, and told her very frankly that her work was unactable, but the story as detailed to him possessed vitality. Then he went away, and Miss Merington, instead of becoming disheartened, resolutely set to work, rewrote the first act and afterward finished the play.

On the occasion of Mr. Sothorn's next visit, after the close of the season, he explained that while he liked "Lettarblair," as the piece was then known, very much, he believed that it would be more to his interest to play Henry Arthur Jones' "The Dancing Girl" during his next tour. He advised her to sell her comedy to any one who would produce it promptly, but also told her that if she cared to wait until he got ready he would put it on. Later in the season, after there had been a good deal of revising done, Mr. Sothorn notified Miss Merington that he would give "Lettarblair" a trial matinee at the Lyceum. This was done, and the press notices were on the whole extremely favorable, although there were manifest crudities to which Miss Merington told me that even she was not blind. Next morning Mr. Sothorn delighted the hopeful author with the announcement that he had decided to use "Lettarblair" for the season of 1892-3.

Miss Merington spent a part of the past summer with that prince of kindly men, Joseph Jefferson. By his advice much pruning was done, and two irrelevant characters were ruthlessly eliminated, so that the piece as produced at the Lyceum last month stood forth a nearly faultless piece of dramatic construction.

Miss Merington is probably less than twenty-five years old. Her face denotes the strongest intellectuality, and she has a terse and incisive manner of expressing herself which is positively captivating. She is tall, rather slender, and though not robust in constitution is a devotee of swimming. She lives in a little cottage.



MISS MARGUERITE MERINGTON like-housed at the corner of One Hundred and Forty-first street and the Grand Boulevard, only a few rods away from the Hudson river, and it was at a window commanding this beautiful view that "Captain Lettarblair" was slowly created.

Miss Merington was not born in the United States, but has lived here since she was a little child. Her modesty at her achievement, the magnitude of which she seems scarcely to realize, makes her a somewhat difficult person to interview. She says that she will make playwrighting her life work.

There is encouragement in Miss Merington's experience for aspiring dramatic authors. Had she given up at the first, second or third obstacle encountered success would have eluded her, and the American stage would have suffered accordingly. **OCTAVUS COHEN.**

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A. O. U. W.

The Order Prosperous in Missouri—Dr. Doherty's Successor Appointed.

In many parts of the United States enthusiastic work in behalf of the order is being done, which has built up the membership in a most satisfactory manner. In all parts of the United States the work was as prosperous as it is in Missouri there would probably be a million members of the order. There is no reason why this result cannot be obtained.

The vacancy in the office of supreme medical examiner caused by the death of Dr. Doherty has been filled by the appointment of Grand Recorder Dr. Win. C. Richardson, of Missouri. This is a most excellent appointment, as the experience of Dr. Richardson gives him peculiar qualifications for the office. He will make a most admirable officer. Missouri now has two officers of the supreme lodge, and should show by her activity that the honor is well bestowed.

Michigan had two assessments for August.

Nebraska lodges are generally erecting their own halls. This is not only an excellent advertisement of the order, but an illustration of the stability and permanency of the A. O. U. W. in the land, as well as a suitable investment.

The attention of the order has evidently turned toward the degree of honor and in many jurisdictions new lodges are being instituted with many good results.

The maintenance of conditions as now prevailing in the A. O. U. W. as a whole, possesses the requisite compound of nutrient and waste to sustain its vitality and render it healthful.

The A. O. U. W. in Michigan has paid out \$250,000 to the beneficiaries of deceased members since Jan. 1.

More young men are coming into the order than ever before. They know a good thing when they see it, and the reduction of the age limit to forty-five just suits them.

The A. O. U. W. has kept many a woman out of the poorhouse and many an orphan boy and girl out of crime and pauperism.

Is there a library in your lodge? If not, why not?

"Don't search for uncomfortable and detracting things to say about the order, but store up and repeat all the good things you hear about it." is a good motto to follow.

Near 400 applications were made in July in Nebraska.

No assessment in Nebraska for August, making but three calls levied during the past eight months.

Grand Master Neal has appointed Dr. N. G. Smith, of Greencastle, Ind., grand medical examiner, vice Curtner, deceased.

Oregon has 4,384 members, a gain of 540 this year; 84 lodges, gain of 17 over last report, and 8 D. of H. lodges.

L. O. O. F.

News from the Massachusetts Jurisdiction—The Rebekah Degree.

The annual session of the grand lodge of Massachusetts was held recently in Odd Fellows' hall, Boston. During the term three new lodges have been instituted, making the total number 216. The whole number instituted for the year was 9. The semiannual reports show the following work for the term: Number initiated, 2,224; admitted by card, 140; reinstated, 38; total admission, 2,402; withdrawn by card, 133; suspended, 323; expelled, 7; deceased, 317; total deductions, 750; net gain for the term, 1,622; number of rejections, 133; degrees conferred, 6,702; past grants, 5,821; members, 44,800; amount for relief, \$114,463.33; total receipts, \$235,400.00. There were 6 Rebekah lodges instituted during the term; there are now 112 lodges in this jurisdiction.

The annual reunion of the Rebekahs of western New York recently was the largest ever held. There were over 300 representatives present.

The Rebekah branch of the order is very prosperous in Indiana.

The abstract from the term reports of Rebekah lodge of Ontario to June 30 shows 11 lodges in existence; 70 brothers and 74 sisters admitted; 2 brothers and 1 sister died; 83 brothers and 60 sisters censured; a present membership of 499 brothers and 523 sisters—total 1,021—with assets amounting to \$2,835.45.

There was expended in relief in Ontario during the past year the sum of \$65,293.84. If there be those who say this amount is not great, who is there who can say it is small?

The oldest member of the sovereign grand lodge is James P. Sanders, past grand sire, who resides at Yonkers, N. Y. He has been a continuous attendant at the sessions for thirty consecutive years.

North Carolina gained 901 members last year.

Order Chosen Friends.

What is our order? Is it in part to feel for others' woes and share them too? 'Tis that which warms and elevates the heart. 'Tis friendship, pure, unshaken, tried and true. The rainbow never tires doing good work for the order.

The order is now a little over thirteen years old and has done much to alleviate suffering and want. It has paid its death losses promptly at an average cost per thousand of only eight dollars per year to its members.

The supreme councilor will not permit a council to be organized at Creede, the new mining camp in Colorado.

John T. Percival, formerly past grand councilor of Michigan, has been appointed A. S. C. of Washington, with headquarters at Spokane.

Knights and Ladies of Honor.

The deaths enumerated on the August assessments are credited as follows: Indiana, Michigan, Mississippi and Pennsylvania, 1 each; Arkansas and North Carolina, 2 each; Massachusetts and Ohio, 3 each; New Jersey, 4; Texas, 5; Kentucky, 6; Missouri, 7; Illinois, 14, and New York, 15.

THE TWENTY-FOUR HOUR WONDER.

Shorland, the English Rider, and His Recent Remarkable Feat.

Wheelmen all over the world are talking about Frank W. Shorland, the English rider, and his recent remarkable feat in lowering the world's twenty-four hour record. He rode 413 miles in that time, a performance so far ahead of the record



FRANK W. SHORLAND.

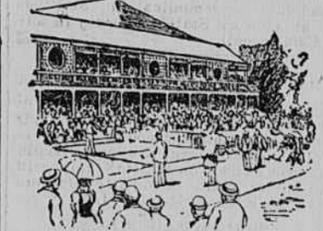
broken that wheelmen in general believe Shorland will remain champion for some time.

Not long ago F. E. Spooner, of Chicago, broke the record by riding about 375 miles in twenty-four hours, which was eleven miles better than the mark made by Frank Waller in California a few days before. Spooner's feat was considered remarkable, but Shorland's ride makes it look very slow. Shorland covered 300 miles in about 10h. 50m. and 400 miles in 23h. 14m.

Shorland is only twenty-two years of age. He has been riding since 1887, and makes a specialty of long distance contests. His wheel is a geared ordinary, which he prefers to a safety.

The Tennis Battle at Newport.

People interested in tennis all over the United States have watched with interest the play for the championship of America at Newport, R. I. The court upon which so many famous tennis players have



THE COURT AT NEWPORT.

fought for supremacy is one of the best in America. It is so surrounded by grand stands and hotel piazzas that an excellent view of the contests is obtainable.

Hundreds of well known society people always attend the matches, and as tennis is not only a very scientific and enjoyable game, but also a game that is quite "the thing" interest in the sport is increasing every year.

Mile Runner Elmer White.

Elmer L. White is the best mile runner in the New England states. For two years he has met all comers at the Amateur Athletic union's annual championships and defeated them. He was scratchman in the event this year, but none of the men who were favored with handicaps could defeat him. White belongs to the Suffolk Athletic club.

In the few years that White has been running he has won a large number of prizes, and he now thinks of retiring from the club path. If he takes this step he will devote his attention in the future to bicycling.

ELMER L. WHITE.

Girls' Dada.

Small Son—I don't want to wear these things.
Mother—Why, those are suspenders.
Small Son—I know. I 'spects you'll be puttin me in dresses next.—Good News.

Considerate.



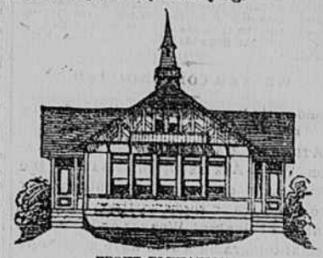
"Giv' us a pull, won't you?"
"I would do it, Bill, you know I would, but I'm afraid it's too strong for you, and it'd stunt your growth."—Brooklyn Life.

Stuart Robson has returned from Europe. His only modern play during the coming season will be "The Henrietta."

A MODEL SCHOOL HOUSE.

The Ventilation Plan Gives Each Pupil Thirty Cubic Feet of Air Per Minute. (Copyright, 1892, by American Press Association.)

Most of those who attend school breathe very little of God's pure air. What they breathe they get third and fourth hand. Pure air is cheap, but it is difficult to get into a schoolroom. It is penned up, confined, breathed and breathed again as a rare commodity—as something which comes high and must not be wasted. Children in school have a much harder time than those of us who work in offices and stores and mix with the general movement of the world's affairs. At the time when they are growing they have to make the strongest drafts upon nature. When they need the most freedom they are deprived of that which is properly their own. Those of us who work in offices would consider it a great hardship if we had to sit in school-rooms, a still greater one to breathe school-room air, and yet more obnoxious to have to keep still, not to lean over on the desk, not to speak to our companions. Under the best conditions school life is difficult enough, but in a rotten, polluted atmosphere it is positively destroying.

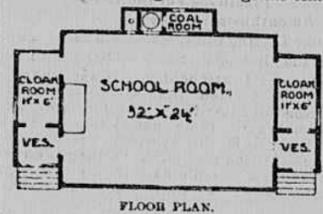


FRONT ELEVATION.

Here is a school house plan which undertakes to make life a little easier for the scholars. It does not do a great deal, it does not change the school system which prevents proper relaxation; it does not allow the scholar to move his feet around on the floor or in any way to make himself comfortable.

Every scholar in every schoolroom should have thirty cubic feet of relatively pure air per minute. At the same time that this air is coming to the room means should be provided for drawing to the outside that which is foul. By forcing thirty cubic feet of air per pupil into a room and drawing that much out a high degree of purity is secured. In the state of Massachusetts we have a very highly civilized way of caring for the pupils in their schools. A few wise men went before the legislature and told them what they should do—what kind of a law to pass. The members of the legislature were wise enough to do it. These fresh air philanthropists said, "You should pass a law which compels those who have to do with the construction and maintenance of school houses to provide each pupil with at least thirty cubic feet of air per minute and with not more than nine parts of carbonic acid gas in 10,000." This law is enforced through the agency of the district police of the state of Massachusetts. This is civilization. We will all come to it in time. Some one must preach it, however, or it will never be brought about.

The reformer who merely objects never reforms. People want to know how it is to be done. Take this plan, for instance: At the back of the schoolroom is shown a little projection, in one end of which is a coal or fuel room; next to that a brick inclosed room with a schoolroom heater in it, and next to that heater, on the left, a ventilating stack. Now the heater and ventilating stacks do not ventilate unless they are properly arranged. Experience has proved that when rightly constructed they will properly ventilate and provide air in quality and quantity as above mentioned. The schoolroom heater is set over an outside air connection so that it may be taken into the little heating room, warmed to its proper temperature and sent to the schoolroom. Thus we have pure outside air warmed to the proper temperature and directed into the room. There is a temperature of the air supply. If it be too warm the valve may be changed and a larger proportion of cold air supplied. Thus the quantity of fresh air is never changed. There is a definite quantity of either warm or cold air sent into the room at all times, but if it be too cold the valve is changed so that a larger proportion of the outside air is brought into contact with the heater. This valve is called a mixing valve. It is arranged to change the tem-



FLOOR PLAN.

perature by varying the amount of air which comes in contact with the stove while the total supply to the room remains constant. Thus the quantity of supply is constant, though the temperature may be variable.

So much for the supply of the proper quantity and quality of air. Now as to the withdrawal of the air from the room. It should be borne in mind that this warm air is supplied some seven or eight feet from the floor. In the vent stack is the smoke-pipe from the heater; or, if necessary, a part of the heater itself or a drum or other device which will heat the air in the vent stack. The vent stack has an opening at the top and one at the bottom in the schoolroom. The stack being heated, it causes a strong backward draft and draws the air out of the room as fast as it comes into it.

The question may be asked, Will this work in this way? The fact is it does do work. There is neither patent nor monopoly in this country, but in the course of time it will be made and manufactured every place if only the people know of it and demand it. The distribution of this knowledge is the work of the newspapers.

LOUIS H. GINSON.

Suggested by Nature.
The idea of festoons was of course originally derived from the practice of using actual wreaths for the festival decorations of temples and public places, which idea in its turn might probably be traced to a suggestion from the trailing plants which in primeval forests festooned themselves from branch to branch and from tree to tree. The device was used with fine discrimination and restraint by the Greek and Pagan artists, developed and enlarged by the Italian and overdone usage by the French revivalists.—Decorator and Furnisher.

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